

Zion National Park Irrigation System,
Crawford/Gifford Canal
Zion National Park
Springdale vicinity
Washington County
Utah

HAER No. UT-38-A

HAER
UTAH,
27-SPDA.V,
2A-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
Rocky Mountain Regional Office
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 25287
Denver, Colorado 80225

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

HAER
UTAH,
ZV-SPDA-V,

Zion National Park Irrigation System, Crawford/Gifford Canal

ZA-

HAER No. UT-38-A

Location: Zion National Park
Springdale vicinity, Washington County, Utah

Date of Construction: c. 1890s; Alterations - 1933, 1941

Present Owner: National Park Service
U. S. Department of the Interior

Present Use: Irrigation canal

Significance: Although no extant remains of irrigation mechanisms exist, the canal retains structural integrity. Its course is clearly visible for most of the approximate 1-1/2 mile length and its point of diversion is discernible.

Researcher: James Jurale
October 7, 1984

The Crawford/Gifford Canal was designed and built by Mormon settlers in Zion, whose community of farms in the Oak Creek Canyon was sometimes referred to as Crawfordville. The canal and its systems of laterals provided water for livestock and irrigated fields of alfalfa and sorghum. Water was originally diverted from the west bank of the Virgin River (approximately one mile north of the present-day Virgin River Bridge) by means of a pioneer-built wooden headgate. In 1931, the Oak Creek Canyon farms were purchased by the National Park Service, which took possession of the water delivery system. In 1933, Civilian Conservation Corps personnel of Camp N.P.2 widened the canal to 18 inches, for a distance of 5,178 feet. A concrete cyclopean-type diversion dam was installed at the head of the canal on December 23, 1941, by the maintenance department of Zion National Park.

Although the canal is no longer functional, its course is clearly visible. The point of diversion is marked by a large boulder just upstream from a rock slide on the west bank of the Virgin River. The channel of the canal is outlined by cottonwood trees and brush for most of its approximately 1-1/2-mile course. The ditch runs south, following the Virgin River on its west bank, traverses the base of the Virgin Formation to the northwest of the Visitor's Center, then turns northwest for .5 mile up Oak Creek.

Bibliography

Civilian Conservation Corps Narrative Reports for 1933.

J. L. Crawford. Interviewed by James Jurale, July 27, 1984.

On-site observations

"Zion National Park Work Completion Report, 1941.